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Captain Anne of the Red Cross

—BY—
MERAB EBERLE.

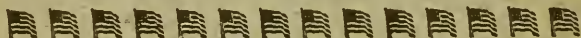


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— or —

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**A Red Cross Comedy
for Girls.**

By MERAB EBERLE

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Franklin, Ohio

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Denver, Colo.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

ANNE—An excitable girl of initiative.

ELIZABETH—Practical girl who talks in a high monotone.

GRACE—A person of opinions, tall and angular in movements.

GLADYS } Sisters. Gladys is easily frightened.
MARGARET }

PAULINE—Dictatorial and possessed of a superior air.

GERTRUDE—Affected and cynical.

RUTH—Affects Eastern mannerisms and is good-natured.

All are American girls, eager to do their best by the U. S.

BRIDGET O'FLANNIGAN—Janitress, fat and Irish

MARY DOKENWADDLE—Her friend, fat and German.

DEC 12 1918

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no 1

Capt. Anne of the Red Cross

ACT I.

(A Red Cross Room. Young women making hospital supplies for the soldiers at the front. Sewing machines are going. Much laughter and talk. Shirts are piled conspicuously along the shelves and on the tables. Materials are scattered about and everyone is working.)

Anne (Seated well to the front of the stage.) Oh I wish we could do something else beside this sewing. Ugh! *(shuddering)* It makes me have that wild feeling. I've got to stop or go mad.

Pauline (Looking at the clock) Well, it's after time anyhow. Stop, everybody. Just this second. Don't you dare take another stitch. We'll have to hurry to get home to our suppers—or dinners. *(Condescendingly)* One forgets in this little town to say "dinner." When I was in New York—

Elizabeth What would you like to do instead of sewing, Anne?

Ruth Maybe she would like nursing better. Wouldn't you, Anne?

Anne (emphatically) No. Mercy, no! I couldn't touch a man. I should faint. I'd rather fight. I'd rather brave the German artillery. Sometimes, do you know, I believe that I should like to fight. Just jump over the top and go on and on and die fighting.

Grace You always did like fighting pretty well. Anne wants to beat everybody. She beats at school, she beats at cards and if she hadn't been sewing so fast that she has left everybody in the shade, she wouldn't be so tired now.

Elizabeth I think I agree with Anne about fighting. It's doing something.

Gladys If I'd hear a gun I'd be so weak. Why, if the fire-bell rings at night I lie in the bed and shake. If I knew it was next door I couldn't get up, I'm so scared.

Margaret If I were you Gladys, I wouldn't tell about it. I'd be ashamed of myself.

Grace I agree with Gladys about the fighting part of it. I wouldn't like a bullet to go "ping" in my skull.

Pauline I don't think any of us would be crazy about that. (*Looking about for approval*) Eh, girls?

Anne But it is beating the men to it that I should like. Here we sit and sew. There they fight and get all the credit.

Grace And the bullets. (*Laughter*)

Anne You laugh, but we could do more than this. We could be spies.

All Spies?

Gertrude Oh my goodness gracious! How exciting.

Anne (*heatedly*) But I mean spies, detectives or whatever you may want to call them. Right here in this town there is more German trickery going on than any of us dream, Horatio, Grace or thing-um-bob.

Grace I wouldn't be surprised. Those hateful old Germans. The more I read about them, the more I despise them. I wish I had an airplane. I bet I could drop a bomb on the Kaiser's head.

Anne We could form ourselves into an organization and promise to keep all the proceedings a secret. It stands to reason that a town with a munition plant is going to have some sort of trouble. A tramp or two, or men disguised as tramps, could fire that munition factory and knock this town to pieces.

Elizabeth I think Anne's right. It is our duty to try and protect the town. If we could do that we

would be fighting just as much as the boys are at the front.

Gladys But I couldn't do it. I'd be petrified. Besides I never kept a secret in my life.

Grace If the whole town was at stake and you were in danger of being thrown out of your bed and through a window, you could keep a secret couldn't you? Come on girls. Let's join ourselves into an organization and be detectives. It won't hurt us anyway. And if we save the munition factory at any time, Mr. Stedman will be in duty bound to marry us—I mean one of us.

Ruth Wouldn't that be thrilling?

Anne No thank you. No fat, old bachelor for me.

Grace Because he isn't thin with a third eyebrow over his mouth, Anne doesn't think he's good looking. I like broad shouldered men.

Gladys (*In a snippy manner*) Perhaps you think he'd marry you.

Grace Surely no. Not with such mental attractions as you can offer. (*Folding up shirt*) Oh gracious, here is one of Snookum's hairs. I wish you'd brush yourself, Anne, before you come here. A soldier doesn't want a cat hair in his wound.

Elizabeth I'm coming around to take that cat's picture, Anne, he's a beauty.

Anne I'm coming around to take a picture of your dog, if you think it will injure his health. He held my cat up a tree for three hours the other day and I just couldn't—

Grace If you could like a man as well as that cat you'd drown him with affection.

(*Enter Bridget O'Flannigan as girls rise to depart*)

Pauline Oh, here comes the janitress. (*Patronizingly.*) Come here, Mrs. O'Flannigan and let me

introduce you to the girls. (*All nod their heads and murmur acceptance of introduction.*)

Biddy Faith and this is a woild looking room. How could any one woman be ixpicted to clane it? With that dull pain over your heart, Bridget O'Flannigan, I can see that the young ladies will soon be making ready your shroud.

Pauline And how do you like your new quarters, Mrs. O'Flannigan?

Biddy And how do I like my new phwat?

Grace She means your rooms, your house. The place where you live.

Biddy Oh, and 'tis a sad day whin I moved to thim rooms. Such a noise and a racket. It is loike tin thousand hoives of bees.

Anne Where does she live?

Pauline Right next door.

Biddy Right nixt door? Mither o' Mike. You mean next partition. (*Goes to partition at rear of room and taps it.*) So thin and dilicate loike.

Gertrude But then you are very handy to your work.

Pauline Yes, that is one reason why I persuaded Mrs. O'Flannigan to take this work. I considered that she would be a protection to these rooms.

Biddy Yis. The rooms' guardeen angel, I am. Phwat? (*She moves bucket about ostentatiously and flourishes mop.*)

Grace The meeting adjourns.

Pauline Good evening, Mrs. O'Flannigan. It will not take you long to clean up, will it? We are going to come again this evening to get out a rush order of surgical dressings.

(*All the girls exit.*)

Biddy Not long. A little water there and a little

here. And a damnation on the Rid Cross. Begorrah, I'm a Sinn Feiner. Up with the Kaiser and down with that Wilson for a thin face bit of a parson. He'll be a frind to thim pratin' English will he and I will show him. (*Flourishes mop dramatically.*)

(*Dutch Mary Dokenwaddle enters unobserved by Biddy and listens to the last of the monologue.*)

Mary Gute efnin.

Biddy (*Starts and stumbles over bucket and falls in the water spilled.*) A thousand perditions and thunderbolts blast your soul, Dutch Mary Dokenwaddle.

Mary Already must you careful be to whom you speak such vorts still. I vill haf you understanding dat you must not so to me speak. (*Advances on Biddy with clenched fists.*)

Biddy (*Conciliatorily*) Shure and ye startled me. Didn't ye?

Mary Out of the kindness of my heart I come to see you to home in your new house. To tell you shust how much we ourselves are missing you from the Beersheba Flats. But now is it gute bye I am saying, Biddy O'Flanningan. Guten Abend, doch. (*Starts to leave.*)

Biddy All Mary, ould goirl. Wait but one minute. It was silfish in me not to understand the neighborin' spirit of ye. Wait, begorrah, but an instance and the claning will be done. To hill, says I to the Red Cross and the botherin' young ladies. (*She splashes about vigorously with the mop.*) Stand where ye are, my ould friend. 'Tis the sore eyes that a sight of your face makes well.

Mary Ach ja. So speak you really? You are then actually a friend of the Vaterland? Two of them young ladies what here sew called on me, Frau Dokwaddle, to a baper sign concerning Food Conversation unt I was enraged und I said, "Nein, nein, vill

I not, The Kaiser ist ein noble man, he ist a gute friend of der Gott."

Biddy And the Kaiser may be a Vaterland or a goat but bejabbers, 'tis the England I hate. I'm a Sinn Feiner. Hurray for the green flag, St. Patrick and the shamrock, says I. The rist of the airth can go the devil.

Mary Now jetz before I go, should I like der cozy little home to see where lives my gute friend, Mrs. O'Flanningan.

Biddy And why not, says I? But hist and I have a siset to tell ye. There is big business going on in Biddy O'Flanningan's rooms, this same afternoon. Do ye hear?

Mary (*After listening to a noise that is heard through the partition.*) I bin not deaf. My ears yet hear. Ist the alt man having a party?

Biddy And a party you might call it. My ould man and your ould man and the ithers—

Mary My alt man? What does he here? And I thought him safe at Schmiddy's saloon.

Biddy Safe at Schmiddy's saloon! Is my front parlor not so good as Schmiddy's saloon? With me rose rug and the little chiny dog on the mantle and thim around spitting at the new spittoon and hitting it only once in a whoile. And bejabbers, your ould man or mine would not be sitting there were it not for Oirland's good. With a rolling pin in me lift hand and a fist in me right, I could run a dozen min the size of thim out of me house.

Mary And again I offend and mean not to. Id ist only that I an eye on my husband keep to know where he ist. He would do wrong already did I not watch him.

Biddy You speak loike a sister, loike a friend. Hist now. They are planning, the whole of thim to

bust up the Stedman munition plant, to send it sky high to the hivins.

Mary Mein Gott! Ja, wirschlich doch.

Biddy 'Tis for Oirland.

Mary Id ist for the Kaiser. When will the occashun happen?

Biddy They are planning now. There are six of thim. One is a stranger. He looks loike a pirate or a nobleman of the Rooshian Empire.

Mary (*Making violent gestures*) Down mit der munition plant. Down mit der Red Cross.

Biddy Phwat? Shure and I have not thought of the Rid Cross. Shure and we will do it some damage. But it must not be a bumb. I am afraid of bumbs. An explosion might damage me property too. Me rose rug and me chiny dog. And now are ye ready, we will speak to our ould min on the subject. And we'll have a cup of tay and the finest drap of Oirish whiskey you've seen in a long toime.

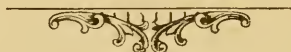
Mary If you had beer menshuned, I would burst through der wall. But whiskey only makes me walk fast out of der door like this.

(*They Exit. After a count of ten Anne enters breathless.*)

Anne Some day I shall forget my head. Where oh where did I put my cat's meat? (*Hunts about in a hurried manner and at length holds hand to her head.*) Let me think. Jones' grocery? The library? No, I didn't leave it there. I remember having a dog follow me down the street asking me for it after that (*Suddenly strikes a listening attitude*) Where is that noise? It sounds like a saloon. Such an uproar and I believe that it is in our new janitress' department. (*Shows interest*) I wonder if she can hear what we say? (*Puts head to partition. After pressing ear to several spots she locates, by climbing on a ladder, an old pipe hole papered over in the flue, There it is*

made apparent by her actions that she is hearing something extraordinary. At length she climbs down.) Oh my knees, I can hardly stand up. No one will believe me. Oh my goodness gracious! What can I do? At least I'm a full-fledged spy now. (*Walks about restlessly.*) One thing I know for certain and that is that no man is going to get in on this. With that "I did it" air. They think women haven't any brains. We'll show them. I've scooped the biggest sensation in Millville, the biggest that ever hit this town, the biggest that will hit it in a thousand years. Hurrah for the women and Hurrah for Uncle Sam. (*Starts to leave. Then pauses.*) Oh, that cat meat! (*Hand goes to pocket*) Here it has been the whole time.

CURTAIN.



ACT II

(*Red Cross Room, the evening of the same day. This time the occupants are dressed in white aprons which completely cover the dress and they wear white caps and are making surgical dressings. Anne is nailing a board over the pipe hole in the flue.*)

Pauline Here it is nine o'clock and we've just got to finish up. It means at least two hours more work.

Gladys I shall be afraid to go home. You know last night there was a man standing on the bridge. I was just paralyzed and couldn't get to sleep until mother came to bed with me. (*Noise of hammering grows deafening.*)

Grace For heaven's sake, Anne, stop that noise. What do you think you're doing?

Anne Fixing the flue hole.

Grace Well before I'd waste my time doing that! Come here and make a bandage or two. You've been acting like a chicken with its head off all evening.

Elizabeth Don't you do it, Anne, that flue needs fixing.

Ruth Anne's so original. "The early bird catches the worm," you know.

Grace I fail to see the application.

Gertrude I'm afraid I'm rather dull too. Was there any application, Ruth?

Anne (*Descending from perch.*) Now girls, put down your sewing. There's something more important on hand tonight. I want you to humor me. Make me chairman *pro tem* of an organization of spies.

Gertrude How thrilling!

Pauline I thought I was chairman here.

Anne You are—of the Red Cross. I want to be chairman of an organization of spies. Please.

Grace If she sets her head on a thing we might as well let her have it, first as last. I'm agreeable.

Elizabeth It's all right with me.

Gladys It would scare me to death to be a spy.

Margaret (*To Gladys.*) I'd be ashamed to say it if I were you.

Ruth I think it would be wonderful. We could give little parties, you know and be called the "Spy Club."

Grace Once called the "Spy Club" and we would be singularly effective as an organization thereafter.

Anne All in favor of me for chairman, say "Aye."

All Aye.

Anne Elected. Now girls, here comes the speech-making. (*She stands on a high table.*) Throw a night-

ingale, each of you, over your head. There are plenty or just any piece of white cloth.

Grace I suppose we must. (*All exhibiting a little more interest, good-naturedly put the nightingales over their heads.*)

Anne Throw me one. No not a dozen. Now that you are all in white what do you look like?

Pauline More like ghosts than anything I can think of.

Anne Good. Exactly. Hand me that package over there. (*She shows a number of white masks.*) Put these on. (*The girls adjust them hurriedly. They must be practised in doing this speedily. Anne dons one as well as the rest.*) Ghosts, wonderful ghosts. How do you like it? Goodness, I'm afraid of you. And now Grace, hand me that package.

Grace Horrors. It's heavy.

Anne (*Opens box and shows revolvers.*) See.

Gladys (*Shrieking.*) I cannot stand it.

Anne They're Fourth of July revolvers. I got them at Adamson's. If you carry on that way, we'll have all of Millville in here. They only have blank cartridges in them. They make a noise—

Gladys Oh, oh!

Gertrude I must say that I consider this nonsensical.

Ruth A party, girls, this way. Wouldn't it be glorious?

Grace It reminds me of the Ku-Klux Klan.

Anne Of course it does and, girls, this is now the time for me to make a speech.

All Hear. Hear.

Anne We've entered this war for a purpose. (*Calls of hear, hear.*) Some of us don't like the others. We disapprove of each others way of dress. We don't

like one another's mannerisms but we all want to whip Germany and we are all down on the Kaiser. It's not the Germans themselves that we want to hit so hard, it's their Kaiser, old Bill Hollenzollern. The Stars and Stripes can come it over the German flag at any time. That is if we all help. Now I want to ask you girls a plain question. If you knew that German treason was abroad in this town tonight would you give your lives to stop it? Our boys are over there being shot down, would you give your lives here to help them over there?

Grace I should say.

Anne All of you say, "We would."

All We would.

Anne Fine! Now just suppose that the Stedman-munition plant was to be fired. Would you help scare the men who are to do it?

All We would.

Grace This sounds like the marriage ceremony.

Anne And that these very rooms were to be entered and vandals were to destroy our work of days and so hinder our Red Cross hospitals. Would you help catch the vandals?

All We would.

Anne Swear it. Say, "We swear it."

All We swear it.

Anne Now girls don't scream. I have something awful to tell you. (*Gladys falls on shoulder of Margaret who shakes her sister and stands her up. All manifest interest.*) Tonight these rooms are to be entered and all our work destroyed. (*All ask at once, "Who said so? When? Are you crazy?"*)

Elizabeth The Ku-Klux isn't in it.

Anne Girls, I'll have to ask you to believe me. Listen please. At half past five I came back for er—

something I forgot and I heard a noise in the janitress' rooms,

Pauline Oh we'll have to protect Biddy.

Anne Protect nothing. She's the worst of them.

It's she with another woman who is going to damage the Red Cross.

Grace For heaven's sake, everybody, keep still and let Anne talk.

Anne Yes, girls, let me talk. (*Looks at wrist watch.*) We only have half an hour. I heard a noise in the janitress' rooms. So I listened at the partition but the talking was jumbled. Then I thought of the flue, and through the pipe hole I heard— well I heard enough to know that at eleven o'clock the Stedman munition plant is to be blown up. It may set the whole town on fire.

Grace Oh my soul, have you told the marshal?

Anne Now girls, we don't want any men in this.

Grace Oh, don't we? I for one want a thousand.

Anne Not a one.

Gertrude But we must.

Anne If all the men were at war we could do it, couldn't we? Girls, you swore a moment ago what you would do.

Pauline But we didn't know.

Elizabeth But we did swear.

Anne Please, all of you, be as terrific as you look. In the dark you would scare the soul out of any man that lived. Some of us must go right away to the munition plant and one of us will stay here.

Elizabeth I'll go to the munition plant. I've scared people before with a costume something like this.

Gladys Well for me, I'd rather be out in the open so I can run. It's me for the munition factory,

Anne And who'll stay here?

Pauline Suppose you do—you're so brave.

Anne I will, gladly.

Grace I don't think she should be left here alone. Suppose something should happen.

Pauline You stay with her.

Grace Well I suppose I should.

Anne Now girls, hurry down the back alleys. Moan like good ghosts and tell the men that you have come to take them to the cemetery.

Gladys It is like a mad nightmare. But in a nightmare I could scream, now I cannot.

Margaret I'd be ashamed.

(All exit with the exception of Anne and Grace.)

Anne I knew I'd have to stay here. Now we've got to hustle. When those women come, and they'll come as soon as it's very quiet and dark in here, you be the ghost that locks them in. And I. Look here. *(Produces a time bomb.)* Don't jump. There's no powder in it. John got it by sneaking away one part of it at a time. We are going to have some fun with those women.

Grace You are optimistic.

Anne They'll think we're going to blow them up. I'll pretend that I'm the ghost of the Gunpowder Plot and you, of the New Jersey Munition Plant Explosion. Out with the lights. *(The stage is then totally darkened.)* Let's hide. *(Count a slow fifteen for a pause during which there must be total silence and darkness.)* I think I heard Biddy's door open. *(Another pause.)* They're coming.

(Biddy O'Flannigan and Dutch Mary enter, carrying lantern. The stage is then very dimly lighted.)

Biddy It is just as I thought. Thim careless young women even lift the door unlocked. Now it's to the

work with us. We will get the stuff in a bunch first. We kin cut up a bit of it and carry the rist off. We will not freeze for the lack of winter flannels after this, ould goirl. (*They commence flinging garments in pile in center of floor.*)

Mary Already I can feel the Kaiser's happiness should he of this learn. Yet may Dutch Mary be a proud lady when she at court introduced ist.

Biddy At court is it? Now we Oirish care nothing for court. Me oncle was king of Oirland once before the English irristed him for thaving. And me father was invoited to be, but he was that afraid that his royal duties would kape him from tending proper to his pigs that he refused. And such illigant pigs as they were.

Mary Vat did I hear? There was a noise.

Biddy Nothing. This place is as quiet as a saloon in a dry town. (*The ghosts made themselves visible, Dutch Mary and Biddy manifest great fright.*) Holy blazes! The first that Oi've seen in me loife.

Mary Mein Gott! (*Sinks to her knees.*)

Grace (*Backs to door and locks it. Speaks in sepulchral tones.*) Well may you beg for life. Tonight is the last night wherein you'll breathe.

Biddy Oh holy Mither o' Mike.

Anne Here are two ghosts sent to accompany you on your way to the cemetery.

Biddy I know the way. I kin go mesilf. (*Backs from Anne as she approaches.*)

Mary Shust here ist where I cannot id stand. (*Shrieks at Grace who approaches her.*) Go! Go! Go!

Anne Be not afraid. We have come to help you.

Biddy Hilp?

Grace I'm the Ghost of the Gunpowder Plot.

Anne I am the Ghost of the New Jersey Munition

Plant Explosion. We have come out of our resting places to aid you.

Grace We are much opposed to the Red Cross.

Anne And we hope through our great love for the Kaiser to help him to the cemetery soon.

Mary We your help do nod need. We can id alone agomplish.

Anne But we can help you do it right. My spirit heard you say that you intend to cut these to pieces. That is no way to do it. Blow this place up. See what I have brought to you, straight from the trenches. (*Displays time bomb.*)

Biddy Oh Arrah, begarrah. 'Tis a bumb. 'Tis I who am so afraid of the things that me hair stands on ind. I am dripping with perspoiration.

Mary (*Runs to the door and shakes it wildly.*) The door, id ist locked.

Anne Here I will light it. (*Does so.*) In five minutes it will go off.

Biddy But the door is locked.

Grace You cannot leave this room by door or window. The spirits of the air are holding them shut.

Biddy But we will be blown to smithereens.

Mary Indo beazes.

Grace Ghosts cannot be blown to pieces.

Biddy But mortals kin.

Anne You will be ghosts too in three minutes. And then we can take you with us to the cemetery.

Mary Gute ghostes, kind ghostes, let a poor woman to home go.

Biddy Faith and I will give you a quart of the best Oirish whiskey.

Mary And a keg, vun whole keg of beer.

Anne We eat not. Neither do we drink. Here hold the bomb. (*Biddy automatically receives it in her hand and then with a howl of fright throws it at the feet of Mary who recovers enough from her drooping spirits to climb on a stand where she remains in the attitude of prayer and repeats the word "Kaiser", at intervals.*)

Anne One more minute and we will take our little ride into Eternity. A very nice place, Eternity. Plenty of room. Have you ever ridden over the tree tops and far away?

Biddy Only on the Chicago illivated.

(*A babble of voices is heard at the door. The ghosts have returned from the munition factory.*)

Elizabeth (*Outside.*) Let us in.

Biddy Glory to St. Dinnis. Hilp has arroived.

Grace (*Advancing to the door.*) Friends we will let you in. (*The ghosts enter.*)

Biddy The cimitiry is open tonight.

(*Mary falls from the table to the floor and lies there groaning.*)

Elizabeth We got them, the men. We scared them to death in the first place. It was easy. Moan girls like you did. (*They all moan in dismal unison.*) We then told them that we had come to take them to the cemetery and they started to run away. When they saw our revolvers and heard a shot or two, they came along with us like lambs. We took them to the lock-up and then ran like mad.

Gladys I was scared to death.

Margaret I'd be ashamed to tell it if I was.

Anne But where is Pauline? (*All look startled.*)

Gertrude She was at the lock-up with us.

Elizabeth The night watch must have got her. Some men down at the fire department ran after us.

Gladys What will we do?

Gertrude She'll tell. She'll tell the whole story.

Elizabeth She'll have to, but I guess it won't mean disgrace.

Gertrude I see you have caught the women. Biddy O'Flannigan, who would have thought it of you? (*All start to throw aside their disguises. Lights brighten.*)

Biddy 'Tis the young women. Ould Dutch Mary, 'tis the young ladies, thimsilves.

Mary Where, oh where?

Biddy Roight here. They were not ghosts. Come git up and let's git out. Your fist and mine are tough customers. Back you spalpeens, Dutch Mary and I have claned up on the min in Schmiddy's saloon this many a toime.

Anne (*Showing revolver.*) Stay where you are. (*Mary gives one look and sinks back on the floor with a groan.*)

(*A great noise is heard outside. All the girls but Anne, who points her revolver at Biddy, rush to the window.*)

Anne What is it?

Grace It looks like the whole town. There's the Marshal, and Mayor and Pauline. And oh, there comes Mr. Stedman. They're cheering. Pauline has told them. Red lights and everything.

Voices from Outside. Hurrah for the Armed Ghosts of Millville. Hurrah, hurrah for the Red Cross. Who says the women can't do the work?

CURTAIN

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By **MERAB EBERLE**

The action takes place at the throne of Autocracy, following a brief prologue by the prophet. The allies come to the aid of the Spirit of Democracy and crush Autocracy. ::

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